

**TABLES SHOWING THE NUMBER OF MICROLEPIDOPTERA  
RECORDED FROM THE BRITISH ISLES, MAY 2000**

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I AM BASING this account on vice-county records, since that is how they are expressed in *Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* (Harley Books). Only vice-county totals are given. If any reader wishes for a breakdown by families, genera or species, his best course would be to pay me a visit and consult my distribution maps. If he seeks this information by correspondence, he cannot expect a prompt reply and will have to accept a list of Log Book numbers rather than specific names.

I have several reasons for writing this list. First, some readers may like to know how their county compares with its neighbours and speculate on the reasons for discrepancy. Secondly, I may receive additional records; some county recorders may find that their own list exceeds mine, since they hold hitherto unpublished records or ones that have appeared in local journals of which I am unaware. On the other hand, there may be others whose lists are shorter and who would wish to receive my additions.

Let no-one expect total accuracy in my figures. I have counted between 75,000 and 80,000 records and as in a political election, a recount might yield different totals. As well as distribution maps, I have a gridded chart with vice-county numbers in the vertical columns and specific names in the horizontal columns, records being shown by ticks in the appropriate intersecting squares. It is possible that a tick has occasionally been misplaced. I have reached my totals by adding these ticks by family and then adding the family totals. I first learnt mental arithmetic as a toddler on my father's knee, but now as a nonagenarian my accuracy may have diminished. However, I am confident that there are no major errors and that the picture presented is sound.

Various factors affect the fecundity of a vice-county. Obviously, latitude is of great importance and as one progresses northwards, numbers diminish quite rapidly. Secondly, the presence of a coast-line, especially if it includes salt-marsh, gives over a 5% boost. Geological variety is important; counties with cretaceous downland, heather heathland or fenland reap an advantage over those that are mainly on clay soil under cultivation. Good deciduous woodland is of high importance. Then there is the human factor. Records will not come without good recorders, and they must be field-workers as well as light-trappers. A mere light-trapper may record little more than 50% of the species in his area. Everybody needs help with identifications and if a county lacks an experienced microlepidopterist, someone who can make good genitalia preparations and a reference collection, perhaps at a local museum, records will be lost or, worse still, incorrectly claimed.

The best counties, as one would expect, are those along the south coast of England from Devon to Essex. Before I started counting, I wondered whether south Hampshire (VC11) or east Kent (VC15) would top the list and was surprised to find

the former an easy winner. I attribute this to its having more resident microlepidopterists who record all year round; the records in East Kent are made mainly by late summer and autumn visitors. For the same reason, West Kent (VC16) narrowly surpasses East Kent. Among the southern counties, North Devon (VC4) stands out as grossly under-recorded.

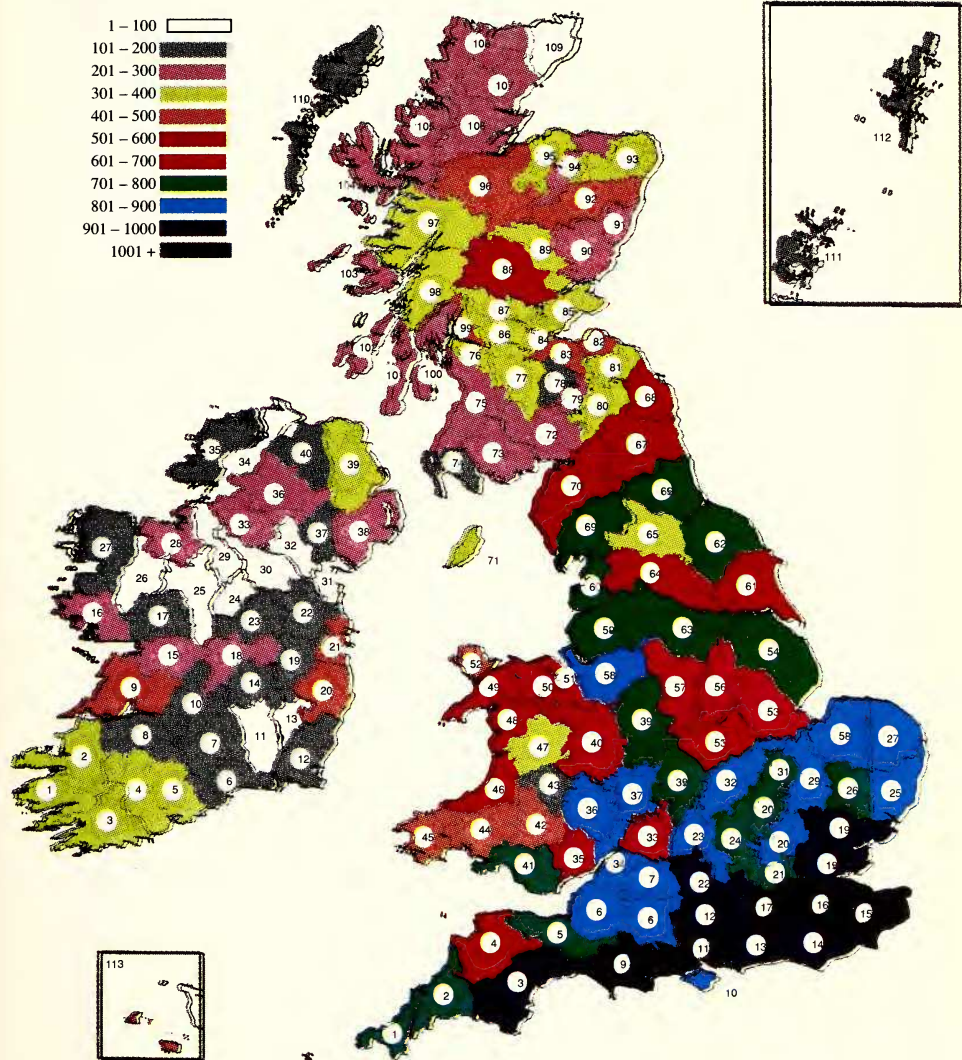
Northwards numbers diminish rapidly but rather erratically, depending on the factors mentioned above and entomological expertise, until one reaches the shores of the Irish Sea in North Wales, Cheshire (VC58) and Lancashire (VCs 59 & 60) where relative abundance is increased. By contrast, along the northern shores of the Irish Sea, from Cumberland (VC70) to Wigtownshire (VC74), microlepidoptera seem to be remarkably scarce. This may in part be due to under-recording, but I myself and other collectors have fared badly in these counties, indicating a genuine impoverished fauna. The lowest English vice-county is North-west Yorkshire (VC65), where records are particularly hard to achieve. I believe that with full coverage over the whole of England North-west Yorkshire would still remain bottom of the list.

Wales, apart from the northern coastal counties, is probably under-recorded. There are two counties that stand out for the paucity of their records. One is Montgomeryshire (VC47). The late H.N. Michaelis, who added so much to our knowledge of the Microlepidoptera of North Wales, said to me once that it was a wretched county and not worth visiting. I am sure he was right, but because it is so seldom visited, even its limited fauna is under-recorded. The other county, which is worse still, is Radnorshire (VC43). I am sure it is better populated than its present numbers show. Unfortunately, requests for records made of the County Recorder have met with no response, and several lists sent to him by me have not been acknowledged.

Scotland breaks the rules given above in that its most prolific county is Mid-Perthshire (VC88), the farthest from the sea. The reason for its pre-eminence may be human, since it harbours the Rannoch district, which has always been popular with collectors. Equally popular is east Inverness-shire (VC96), but it lags well behind, probably because it is situated further to the north. Aberdeenshire and its neighbours are high on the list because of the active recording conducted by the biological staff at Aberdeen University. The more northerly counties of Banffshire (VC94) and Moray (VC95) have recently attracted their attention and notable additions to their lists have ensued. Caithness (VC109) has the lowest score in Britain and it is indeed a barren county. As a result, it is rarely visited and its meagre assemblage of Microlepidoptera is largely unexplored. Yet entomological wildernesses sometimes produce highly localised rarities and time spent on a fuller survey of the county would not be ill-spent.

Recording in Ireland is patchy. Potentially the most prolific counties are those that border the Irish Sea, facing those from Anglesey to Lancashire, and, as one would expect, Cos. Wicklow (VCH20) and Dublin (VCH21) rank highly. However, they are surpassed by Co. Clare (VCH9) which is visited for its marvellous Burren terrain by virtually every lepidopterist in the British Isles. Coastal counties are reasonably

Map showing the number of Microlepidoptera recorded from each vice-county in the British Isles in May, 2000



well covered, but clearly there is more recording to be done in them. Most of the central counties are almost unknown, the number of recorded Microlepidoptera sinking to 47 in Longford (VCH24), where the highest scoring family is Nepticulidae, partly as a result of John Langmaid and myself driving through the county on 16 September 1995. In five other counties Nepticulidae are second behind Tortricidae, owing to casual road-side recording done by my wife and myself or John Langmaid and myself. The 317 new vice-county records made by John and me in our eight day Irish tour of 1995 were mostly leaf-miners and about half were Nepticulidae.

It is a sad fact that there are very few Scottish or Irish microlepidopterists, Ken Bond of Ireland being a notable exception. Almost all the recording in these countries has been made by Englishmen.

Some of the vice-county totals are very close and no doubt the order will be changed by the Microlepidoptera review for 2000.

### Vice-county lists showing the number of Microlepidoptera recorded from each

#### 1. England

1. VC11	South Hampshire	1139	31. VC5	South Somerset	790
2. VC16	West Kent	1071	32. VC2	East Cornwall	773
3. VC15	East Kent	1069	33. VC38	Warwickshire	755
4. VC9	Dorset	1060	VC60	West Lancashire	
5. VC17	Surrey	1040	35. VC54	North Lincolnshire	752
6. VC22	Berkshire	993	36. VC26	West Suffolk	750
7. VC13	West Sussex	986	37. VC59	South Lancashire	745
8. VC18	South Essex	978	38. VC63	South-west Yorkshire	740
9. VC19	North Essex	960	39. VC21	Middlesex	737
10. VC14	East Sussex	951	VC69	Westmorland	
11. VC3	South Devon	948	41. VC31	Huntingdonshire	723
12. VC12	North Hampshire	944	42. VC39	Staffordshire	713
13. VC28	West Norfolk	883	43. VC1	West Cornwall	711
14. VC23	Oxfordshire	875	44. VC66	Co. Durham	703
15. VC10	Isle of Wight	868	45. VC57	Derbyshire	696
16. VC29	Cambridgeshire	863	46. VC33	North Gloucestershire	653
17. VC8	South Wiltshire	861	VC40	Shropshire	
18. VC20	Hertfordshire	853	48. VC56	Nottinghamshire	638
19. VC36	Herefordshire	844	49. VC53	South Lincolnshire	618
20. VC25	East Suffolk	833	50. VC64	Mid-west Yorkshire	588
21. VC6	North Somerset	830	51. VC55	Leicestershire	574
22. VC37	Worcestershire	828	52. VC4	North Devon	561
23. VC27	East Norfolk	823	53. VC61	South-east Yorkshire	557
24. VC7	North Wiltshire	821	54. VC67	South Northumberland	539
25. VC32	Northamptonshire	818	55. VC68	North Northumberland	530
26. VC34	South Gloucestershire	811	56. VC70	Cumberland	506
27. VC58	Cheshire	810	57. VC113	Channel Islands	443
28. VC30	Bedfordshire	800	58. VC71	Isle of Man	364
29. VC62	North-east Yorkshire	796	59. VC65	North-west Yorkshire	347
30. VC24	Buckinghamshire	794			

**2. Wales**

1. VC41	Glamorgan	735
2. VC49	Caernarvonshire	677
3. VC50	Denbysshire	660
4. VC35	Monmouthshire	651
5. VC51	Flintshire	548
6. VC48	Merionethshire	539
7. VC46	Cardiganshire	520
8. VC42	Breconshire	472
9. VC45	Pembrokeshire	446
VC52	Anglesey	
11. VC44	Carmarthenshire	424
12. VC47	Montgomeryshire	309
13. VC43	Radnorshire	198

**3. Scotland**

1. VC88	Mid-Perthshire	531
2. VC92	South Aberdeenshire	497
3. VC83	Mid-Lothian	457
4. VC96	East Inverness-shire	453
5. VC99	Dunbartonshire	428
6. VC82	East Lothian	418
7. VC98	Argyll Main	389
8. VC86	Stirling	370
VC95	Moray	
10. VC76	Renfrewshire	369
11. VC93	North Aberdeenshire	363
12. VC81	Berwickshire	361
13. VC89	East Perthshire	358
14. VC85	Fifeshire	331
VC91	Kincardineshire	
16. VC87	West Perthshire	329
17. VC77	Lanarkshire	323
18. VC80	Roxburghshire	318
19. VC97	West Inverness-shire	302
20. VC94	Banffshire	293
21. VC84	West Lothian	283
22. VC104	North Ebudes	268
23. VC76	Ayrshire	263
24. VC101	Kintyre	252
VC105	West Ross	
26. VC90	Angus	247
27. VC106	East Ross	246
28. VC73	Kirkcudbrightshire	237
VC107	East Sutherland	
30. VC103	Mid-Ebudes	225
31. VC72	Dumfriesshire	223
32. VC79	Selkirkshire	222
33. VC100	Clyde Islands	218
34. VC102	South Ebudes	217

35. VC108	West Sutherland	212
36. VC78	Peeblesshire	197
37. VC111	Orkney Islands	181
38. VC74	Wigtownshire	178
39. VC110	Outer Hebrides	164
40. VC112	Shetland Islands	132
41. VC107	Caithness	62

**4. Ireland**

1. VCH9	Clare	465
2. VCH21	Dublin	458
3. VCH20	Wicklow	409
4. VCH2	North Kerry	376
5. VCH3	West Cork	349
6. VCH4	Mid-Cork	336
7. VCH39	Antrim	319
8. VCH1	South Kerry	311
9. VCH5	East Cork	306
10. VCH16	West Galway	296
11. VCH38	Down	272
12. VCH15	South-east Galway	252
13. VCH33	Fermanagh	248
14. VCH28	Sligo	245
15. VCH18	Offaly	209
16. VCH6	Waterford	201
VCH36	Tyrone	
18. VCH37	Armagh	200
19. VCH7	South Tipperary	198
20. VCH12	Wexford	194
21. VCH19	Kildare	175
22. VCH27	West Mayo	155
23. VCH14	Leix	144
24. VCH8	Limerick	143
25. VCH40	Londonderry	131
26. VCH17	North-east Galway	124
27. VCH22	Meath	121
28. VCH35	West Donegal	114
29. VCH10	North Tipperary	113
30. VCH23	West Meath	108
31. VCH30	Cavan	89
32. VCH11	Kilkenny	82
VCH26	East Mayo	
34. VCH13	Carlow	81
35. VCH31	Louth	80
36. VCH25	Roscommon	78
37. VCH29	Leitrim	77
VCH34	East Donegal	
39. VCH32	Monaghan	73
40. VCH24	Longford	47

**Most widespread micro-moth**

In the May issue of this journal (*antea*: 114) Maitland Emmet asked if anyone could guess the identity of the only species of micro-moth that has been recorded from all 113 vice-counties of Great Britain and Ireland. The correct answer is *Celypha* (was *Olethreutes*) *lacunana* (D.& S.).